

Russian Elections

Q. TASS is quoting Yeltsin as saying he's not going to be part of the 2000 campaign, and he's going to support Chernomyrdin.

The President. Chernomyrdin?

Q. Yes.

The President. That's interesting.

President's Safari

Q. What have you seen today, sir?

The President. Well, we've seen probably 20 or 30 different kinds of birds—fascinating ones—including some eagles I had never seen before and some storks I had never seen before and obviously the vultures and then a lot of the smaller, very beautiful birds, like these rollers. There you've got a baboon, right there, and is that an impala with it? An impala, a baboon, and three elephants right here where we're standing.

We saw a water buffalo—I think you saw it also—that had been wounded, apparently, by a lion. We saw the horns of a kudu and the skull, all that remained of what apparently was a lion kill up the road here, and the vultures were still kind of hanging around it.

It's amazing. It's been an amazing day.

Q. Any warthogs? We saw some.

The President. No.

Hillary Clinton. We saw hippos.

The President. We saw a lot of hippos.

Mrs. Clinton. Crocodiles.

Q. Did you check out the stars last night?

The President. It was amazing, wasn't it? The stars were amazing.

Mrs. Clinton. We saw the lions, too.

Q. Oh, you didn't see the lions.

Mrs. Clinton. We did, Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News]. We did.

Q. You saw a lion?

Mrs. Clinton. Yes, we saw a mother lion and four cubs.

The President. Oh, yes. They were up underneath a tree.

Mrs. Clinton. One of the lions was in the tree.

The President. You could barely see them, and the mother lion was on her back, playing with the kids.

Q. I would have killed for that. [Laughter]

The President. It was great. At one point, she even had one of her—one of the cubs'

tail in her mouth. They were playing with it back and forth.

Q. Can a Democratic President admire an elephant?

The President. Yes, and I like to see them concentrated here. [Laughter]

Q. I set you up there.

The President. Actually, I was kind of jealous that the Republicans had appropriated such a nice animal as their symbol. [Laughter] I think they're fascinating, these elephants are.

Q. At the restaurant last night, did you check out any of the zebra or crocodile?

The President. I tried it all.

Q. Those elephants produce more dung than any other animals. [Laughter]

The President. If you write that, make sure you say he did it, not me.

Q. But make sure you say the President was smiling.

Q. Mrs. Clinton, have you enjoyed it?

Mrs. Clinton. Oh, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. at Chobe National Game Park. In his remarks, he referred to former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Legislation Proposing a Uniform Standard Blood-Alcohol Level

March 30, 1998

Although my trip to Africa precludes me from joining Congresswoman Nita Lowey, Congressman Charles Canady, and others gathered in the Roosevelt Room, I want to state once more my strong support for legislation to put the brakes on drunk driving.

Setting a uniform limit for impaired driving at .08 blood alcohol content (BAC) will help us crack down on drunk driving nationwide. At a time when crime all across America is going down, we still lose an American to drunk driving every 30 minutes—every half hour a family is shattered, a child, a parent, a neighbor is lost forever.

By establishing a strong but sensible limit on blood alcohol content, we could save as many as 600 lives a year. And a uniform drunk driving standard would still allow

adults to drink responsibly and moderately—since the .08 BAC standard is not reached until a 170-pound man has had more than four drinks in an hour, and three for a typical woman.

This should not be a partisan issue. Indeed, the bipartisan work of Congresswoman Lowey and Congressman Canady and Senators Lautenberg and DeWine, proves that when leaders from both parties come together, we can set aside political differences to save lives and serve America. It is my fervent hope that the majority of the House will join the large bipartisan majority in the Senate and send me legislation that will make our streets safe, our drivers sober, and our laws more sensible.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

March 30, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The Congress has an obligation and an opportunity to strengthen our democracy by passing comprehensive campaign finance reform. Instead, the Congressional leadership is attempting to derail serious, bipartisan campaign finance reform through procedural means.

The bipartisan plan proposed by Representatives Christopher Shays and Martin Meehan is genuine, tough reform, supported by a large number of lawmakers of both parties. It would address serious flaws in the campaign finance system, by banning unregulated “soft money” raised by both parties, addressing backdoor campaign spending by outside organizations, and strengthening disclosure. This bipartisan measure is the best chance in years to reduce the role of special interests, give voters a louder voice, and treat fairly incumbents and challengers of both parties. This measure has the support of a majority of the Senate, and I believe that if it were allowed to come for a vote, it would have the support of a majority of the House as well.

Instead, the House leadership has determined to thwart serious reform. It has refused to allow the Shays-Meehan bill even

to come up for a vote. Instead, it has offered a plan stocked with proposals—including the so-called “Paycheck Protection” and “Election Integrity” provisions—that are harshly partisan and plainly unacceptable.

Behind the blizzard of proposals and procedural complications, one thing is clear: this is a transparent effort to block reform. I call on the House of Representatives to rise to its responsibility, bring the Shays-Meehan bill to an up-or-down vote, and give the American people the reform they deserve.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Interview With Ebony, Jet, and the American Urban Radio Network in Cape Town

March 27, 1998

Slavery

Q. Mr. President, you’ve made it emphatically clear that you will not apologize for slavery. Do you understand why there’s such controversy around the issue, and are you prepared for Goree Island?

The President. Oh, yes. I think—it was interesting, because after I spoke in Ghana and then in Uganda, and when I spoke in Uganda about how wrong we were to be involved in the slave trade, some people in America said, “Well, why did you do this in Africa,” and “Why haven’t you done the same thing in America?” But most of my African-American friends and advisers don’t believe that we should get into what was essentially a press story about whether there should be an apology for slavery in America. They think that that’s what the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendment was; they think that’s what the civil rights legislation was; and they think we need to be looking toward the future.

But when an American President comes to Africa for the first time and makes a serious trip and a serious commitment to the future, I think recognizing the fact that we did a bad thing in being part of the slave trade, I think, is important here. So I think